

DNREC Sinks Ex-Navy and Army Freighter Turned Fishing Fleet Boat Reedville onto Delaware's Artificial Reef System

The Reedville as it sank about 12:15 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13 on Reef Site No. 11 (the Redbird Reef) /DNREC photo

DNREC continued to broaden the recreational allure of Delaware's renowned artificial reef system today by sinking the Reedville, originally a World War II and Korean Conflict-era coastal freighter and supply ship at a reef site 16 miles offshore and with readings of *38 40.423'N 74* 44.295' W at a depth of 87 feet. The Reedville was converted to a commercial fishing vessel after military decommissioning and has found another new life starting at 12:18 EDT as fish habitat on the ocean floor through DNREC's artificial reef program.

The sinking of the 180-foot long Reedville was the reef program's first deployment of a vessel since a retired Chesapeake Bay cruise ship was sunk late last year onto Reef Site No. 11. That came after the nationally-publicized and viral-videoed 2018 sinking of the retired Lewes-Cape May, N.J. ferry Twin Capes onto the Del-Jersey-Land Reef, second only to Reef Site No. 11 as a popular angling destination. Because of the ship's profile featuring a cavernous hold and 38-foot keel to top of stack, the Reedville is expected to be a boon to two fisheries prominent in Delaware inshore waters, black sea bass and tautog.

"We continue to enhance the angling and recreational diving experience in Delaware by expanding our reef system, which

includes 14 separate reef sites in the Delaware Bay and along the Atlantic Coast,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin. “When we sank Twin Capes two years ago as a centerpiece of the system, it was unmatched as an artificial reef for both providing fish habitat and a spectacular dive with its five decks for underwater exploration. Now with the Reedville, we’ve got four reefed vessels of the same class and we are putting it in a place that will be accessible, attract the most fish and where divers will want to explore, too.”

Reedville joins three other former menhaden boats and onetime military vessels classified as fast-supply coastal freighters now residing on Delaware reefs: the Shearwater, Gregory S. Poole and Atlantic Mist on the Del-Jersey-Land Inshore Reef, so called because it is roughly equidistant from ports of departure in each of the three states the reef’s name entails. The Reedville is the first such ship to be placed on Reef Site No. 11, better known to anglers as the Redbird Reef because it largely consists of 997 retired New York City “redbird” subway cars. The Redbird Reef covers 1.3 square miles of ocean floor and besides fish habitat created by the subway cars, includes the 215-foot-long Chesapeake Bay cruise ship, 86 US Army tanks, eight tugboats, a fishing trawler, and two barges.

The Reedville’s sinking was carried out by Norfolk, Va.-based marine contractor Coleen Marine, which has handled numerous ship and vessel reef deployments over the DNREC program’s existence at many of Delaware’s 14 permitted artificial reef sites after receiving approvals from the EPA for environmental cleanliness and from the US Coast Guard. DNREC’s Division of Fish and Wildlife, which oversees the reef program, paid \$175,000 in federal Sport Fish Restoration funds to buy Reedville from Coleen Marine after the ship settled onto the Redbird Reef.

Originally a Navy ship then an Army FS (freight and supply)-class vessel, the Reedville in its commercial incarnation was renamed for the hub of the menhaden industry, Reedville, Va. –

itself named after Capt. Elijah W. Reed, whose process for extracting fish oil from menhaden in the 19th century enriched him and earned Reedville (population: 500) the label of the wealthiest town in America.

About DNREC

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state's natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities, and educates Delawareans about the environment. The Division of Fish and Wildlife conserves and manages Delaware's fish and wildlife and their habitats, and provides fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing and boating access on nearly 65,000 acres of public land. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with DNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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